

'Jock' strikes as Wycombe come through unscathed

By **STUART EARP** Wycombe Wanderers 1, Watford XI 0

A GOAL after only four minutes by Graham Mackenzie gave Wycombe Wanderers an encouraging victory over a Watford XI in Wednesday's friendly at Loakes Park. And what's just as important, the players came through the game without any injury problems.

This match, which gave Wanderers useful competitive practice before tomorrow's Cup tie against Middlesbrough, was never really played at full pace but the large crowd must have enjoyed some enterprising football by both sides.

Watford player-manager Mike Keen brought down several youngsters in his side plus a few first team men. Keen himself was the pick of the visitors, spraying some fine passes around the field with precision accuracy while Larry McGettigan looked the most dangerous striker. Also upfront was Billy Roberts, who played a couple of friendlies for the Blues last season.

The Wanderers side contained six first team regulars, and

manager Brian Lee brought in his younger players for this game. Amongst them was Mackenzie, who has not played a match since December 10. He came back with a vengeance on New Year's Day and as well as notching the only goal, gave a highly promising performance.

It was "Jock" who hit what was to prove the only goal with the game just four minutes old. He was given plenty of time to measure a shot following a cross from the top wing and gave goalkeeper Dalrymple no chance with a firm left foot drive.

MAKESHIFT

Although having the look of a somewhat makeshift side, Wanderers combined well early on with Terry Reardon, playing at centre back, thoroughly enjoying his new role. His ability to get in front of the Watford forwards was particularly impressive.

With Dave Alexander using the open spaces on the flanks to good effect, Wycombe held the

initiative for much of the first half, although there were few direct chances. One of the best opportunities fell to Paul Birdseye, who played in midfield. He weaved his way past two defenders in the 40th minute but his shot was weakly hit and Dalrymple saved comfortably.

Watford improved after the break with Keen prompting his men and Bristow tidying up at the back. Their lack of power upfront, however, was plainly obvious and it was Wanderers who almost scored when Reardon's free kick ended up rolling past the far post after three players had missed contact. Then Kennedy found himself clear from Dylan Evans' pass but drove over the top with only the 'keeper to beat.

As the half progressed Wycombe's passing deteriorated and Watford began to dictate events. They found Paul Griffiths a difficult proposition, however, the full back again impressing with his distribution from defence.

The game sprang into life in the last 15 minutes. Kennedy set Steve Perrin away in the 76th minute but after beating full back Walsh, Steve drove straight at the 'keeper and then the same player fired just past the far post after an overhead kick by Griffiths.

Watford replied with McGettigan putting in a fine run, beating the reliable Keith Mead and firing in a shot which Brian Steventon saved well but a better chance fell to Kennedy who was again off target after going through on his own four minutes from time.

The Blues had to withstand a spirited Watford rally in the last few minutes but when Gordon Kew, that excellent Football League referee, brought the game to a close, Wycombe had done just enough to deserve their triumph.

Before the kick off on Wednesday, the Wycombe players lined up on half way and waved to the hospital. Watching from there was club chairman,

Jack Smethurst who was admitted earlier in the week.

WYCOMBE: B. Steventon, P. Griffiths, T. Reardon, K. Mead, G. Hand, G. Mackenzie, P. Birdseye (sub H. Kennedy 45 mins.), D. Alexander, A. Horseman, K. Searle (sub S. Perrin 45 mins.), D. Evans.

WATFORD: M. Dalrymple, P. How, W. Lees, D. Bristow, J. Walsh, G. Johnson (sub McCarthy 60 mins.), M. Keen, G. Cox, L. McGettigan, K. Mercer, G. Roberts (sub Coffill 60 mins.).

Referee: G. Kew (Amersham).

Half time: 1-0. **Goalscorer,** Wycombe — Mackenzie (4).

Official paying attendance: 1,500.